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In the Yuchi calendar recorded by Doctor Speck five months agree with those in Swan's list, with but slight variation, both in name and in the period of the year to which they were applied. It seems rather curious that these all belonged to the summer series.[84]

Adair says of the Indians of his acquaintance: "They pay great regard to the first appearance of every new moon, and, on the occasion, always repeat some joyful sounds, and stretch out their hands toward her—but at such times they offer no public sacrifice." [85] And in another place he remarks that they "annually observed their festivals . . . at a prefixed time of a certain moon." [86]

House building was a social affair and was distributed between the spring and fall. Adair gives a very lively account of the operation.

"While the memory of the bleak pinching winds lasts, and they are covered with their winter-blackened skins, they turn out early in the spring, to strip clap-boards and cypress-bark, for the covering of their houses: but in proportion as the sun advances, they usually desist from their undertaking during that favourable season; saying, 'that in the time of warm weather, they generally plant in the fields, or go to war; and that building houses in the troublesome hot summer, is a needless and foolish affair, as it occasions much sweating,'—which is the most offensive thing in life to every red warrior of manly principles. On this account, if we except the women chopping firewood for daily use, it is as rare to hear the sound of an ax in their countries, as if they lived under the inhospitable torrid zone; or were nearly related to the South-American animal Pigritia, that makes two or three days journey in going up a tree, and is as long in returning. When the cold weather approaches, they return to their work, and necessity forces them then to perform what a timely precaution might have executed with much more ease. When they build, the whole town, and frequently the nearest of their tribe in neighboring towns, assist one another, well knowing that many hands make speedy work of that, which would have discouraged any of them from ever attempting by himself. In one day, they build, daub with their tough mortar mixed with dry grass, and thoroughly finish, a good commodious house.[87]

"They first trace the dimensions of the intended fabric and every one has his task prescribed him after the exactest manner."[88]

There was, of course, nothing like a week among them in olden times, though Bartram assures us that the Creeks at one of the towns through which he passed remained quietly in their houses on Sunday out of respect to the white people.[89] The Alabama have the following

[84] Speck, in Anthr. Publs. Univ. Mus., Univ. Pa., vol. i, p. 67.
[85] Adair, Hist. Am. Inds., p. 76.
[86] Ibid., pp. 99–100.
[87] But see p. 372.
[88] Adair, op. cit., p. 417.
[89] Bartram, Travels, p. 428.

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512 805 terms for the days of the week: ni"ta holo', "holy day," Sunday; ni"ta ho'lin ni"ta, "day after holy day," Monday; ni"ta ato'kla, "second day," Tuesday; ni"ta tutcī'na, "third day," Wednesday; ni"ta ostā'ga, "fourth day," Thursday; ātā'lapi, "fifth day," Friday; ni"ta holosī, "little holy day," Saturday. Christmas is ni"ta holo' tcoba', "big holy day," in Koasati, and Kilisme', "Christmas," in Alabama.

221 After the busk men and women alike devoted the rest of the summer largely to the cultivation and harvesting of their crops. In the fall took place the Skunk Dance. After that the hunting began, and the men were away from town much of the time, but, when there was plenty of food or the game was near town, ball contests in which hunting played a part took place, accompanied with feasting and dancing, and these lasted until very cold weather.

574 The following account of these feasts and sports was given me by one of the Texas Alabama and is typical:

Sometimes a woman would make a ball and give it to one of the men who in turn must kill a deer for her. This the women cut up and prepared for all of the people in the village and they assembled at the ball ground to eat it. Then they feasted, played ball, and frequently danced in the evening. Sometimes several balls would be made at the same time and given out by as many women. After the ball or balls were used up another woman made one for another man and the games and feasts were thus continued at the pleasure of the tribe. Sometimes, when a woman gave a ball to a man in this way, she would say she wanted bear meat. Then they would play ball for a while, after which the man would go out with three or four others and kill a bear. They gave this to the woman, who distributed the meat as before. While the men were away the women were out after kanta roots[20] and they prepared a quantity of kanta bread. Kanta was always eaten with bear meat and corn bread (and potatoes) with deer meat. When the kanta was used up the men went for bear once more and the women went to the store and bought wheat flour. These celebrations lasted for some time.

Sometimes, when a woman gave out a ball in this way, she would say she wanted squirrels and the men would kill enough of them for the village, bring them to her and let her distribute them, when the same festivities were repeated. Again she might say she wanted coffee, and the man whom she addressed would go and buy enough for the village. It was brought to the ball ground and prepared there. This giving was often repeated many times.[21]

221 Often, however, the families were separated all winter, those who were related camping together. In the old country, at least, all but

[20] The word kanta was applied to several species of smilax.

[21] See also pp. 526–527, 535–536. Charlie Thompson, my informant, and another Indian now long dead first began to have dinners after the white men's style, and now they are all of that character.

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the old people usually remained in the camps during that time. Bossu says:

"The savages usually set out on the hunt at the end of October. The Allibamons go to a distance of 60, 80, and even 100 leagues from their village, and they carry along with them in their pirogues their entire family; they return only in March which is the season for sowing their fields. They bring back many skins and much smoked meat. When they have returned to their villages, they feast their friends, and make presents to the old people who have been unable to follow them, and who have protected the cabins of the village during this hunting period."[92]

War parties were usually started as soon as the weather began to warm up a little. The labor of planting was, as we shall see, interspersed with ball playing and dancing. Right afterwards the men went out again on a hunt. According to one of my informants they thought if they did not do this the crows would eat the corn and the weevil would get into the beans. Then their summer duties began once more, taking care of the harvest occupying first place. War, ball games, riding, horse racing, and dancing also consumed a great deal of the time. Women naturally made their pots and most of their baskets during this period of the year.

War

Out of consideration for standard classifications of customs I retain the name "war" for this section, but it might rather be called "institutional killing," if not "institutional murder." For while the occasions of war were various and "retaliation" for past offenses by the hostile tribe and the necessity of placating the souls of the slain were always the professed objects, the truth of the matter was that war among the southern Indians was a social institution and warlike exploits necessary means of social advancement.[93] This being the case it is easy to see that the score between most tribes was certain never to be evened permanently and that only a social revolution could abolish the custom in spite of the alliances by which certain single units agreed to settle their differences on other grounds. Ambition for scalps was carried so far, Adair assures us, that "sometimes a small party of warriors, on failing of success in their campaign, have been detected in murdering some of their own people, for the sake of their scalps."[94] This result of economic or rather social determinism reminds us of that canny Scotch captain caught in the Baltic Sea in the act of supplying Russia with the sinews of war when his own

[92] Bossu, Nouv. Voy., vol. ii, pp. 51-52.

[93] Bossu gives the abduction of women as one of the most important causes of war. If this happened to the wife of a chief he says that the entire nation was obliged to avenge the insult.—Nouv. Voy., vol. ii, p. 51. I confess to have read few accounts of wars started in this manner.

[94] Adair, Hist. Am. Inds., p. 393.